

AMENDMENTS TO AND STATUS OF CLAIMS

1-19. (cancelled)

20. (currently amended): A method of inhibiting borehole wall invasion when drilling with a water-based drilling fluid in a subterranean formation, the method comprising: a) providing a water-based drilling fluid comprising: i) a polymer latex capable of providing a deformable latex seal on at least a portion of a subterranean formation where the polymer latex is selected from the group consisting of sulfonated styrene/butadiene copolymer, polyvinyl acetate/vinyl chloride/ethylene copolymer, polyvinyl acetate/ethylene copolymer, polydimethylsiloxane, and mixtures thereof, where the polymer latex comprises particles that average less than 1 micron in size; and ii) water; and b) circulating the water-based drilling fluid in contact with a borehole wall.

21. (original): The method of claim 20 where in providing the water-based drilling fluid, the water comprises salt.

22. (currently amended): The method of claim 20 where in providing the water-based drilling fluid, the fluid further comprises a precipitating agent selected from the group consisting of silicates, aluminum complexes, and mixtures thereof.

23. (original): The method of claim 20 where in providing the water-based drilling fluid, the fluid further comprises a surfactant.

24. (currently amended): A method of inhibiting borehole wall invasion when drilling with a water-based drilling fluid in a subterranean formation, the method comprising: a) providing a water-based drilling fluid comprising: i) a polymer latex selected from the group consisting of sulfonated styrene/butadiene copolymer, polyvinyl acetate/vinyl chloride/ethylene copolymer, polyvinyl acetate/ethylene copolymer, polydimethylsiloxane, and mixtures thereof; ii) a precipitating agent selected from the group consisting of silicates, aluminum

complexes, and mixtures thereof; and iii) water; and b) circulating the water-based drilling fluid in contact with a borehole wall.

25. (original): The method of claim 24 where in providing the water-based drilling fluid, the water comprises salt and is a saturated salt brine.

26. (original): The method of claim 24 where in providing the water-based drilling fluid, the water-based drilling fluid further comprises a surfactant.

27. (currently amended): A method of inhibiting borehole wall invasion when drilling with a water-based drilling fluid in a subterranean formation, the method comprising: a) providing a water-based drilling fluid comprising: i) a polymer latex selected from the group consisting of sulfonated styrene/butadiene copolymer, polyvinyl acetate/vinyl chloride/ethylene copolymer, polyvinyl acetate/ethylene copolymer, polydimethylsiloxane, and mixtures thereof; ii) a precipitating agent selected from the group consisting of silicates, aluminum complexes, and mixtures thereof; iii) a surfactant; and iv) water; and b) circulating the water-based drilling fluid in contact with a borehole wall.

28. (original): The method of claim 27 where in providing the water-based drilling fluid, the water comprises salt.

29. (original): The method of claim 28, where the salt is selected from the group consisting of calcium chloride, sodium chloride, potassium chloride, magnesium chloride, calcium bromide, sodium bromide, potassium bromide, calcium nitrate, sodium formate, potassium formate, cesium formate, and mixtures thereof.

30-31. (cancelled)

32. (original): The method of claim 27 where in providing the water-based drilling fluid, the surfactant is selected from the group consisting of betaines, alkali metal alkylene acetates, sultaines, ether carboxylates, and mixtures thereof.

33. (original): The method of claim 27 where in providing the water-based drilling fluid, the polymer latex is present in the drilling fluid in an amount of from about 0.1 to about 10 vol. % based on the total water-based drilling fluid.

34. (original): The method of claim 27 where in providing the water-based drilling fluid, the precipitating agent is present in the drilling fluid in an amount of from about 0.25 to about 20 lb/bbl based on the total water-based drilling fluid.

35. (original): The method of claim 27 where in providing the water-based drilling fluid, the surfactant is present in the drilling fluid in an amount of from about 0.005 to about 2 vol. % based on the total water-based drilling fluid.

36. (original): The method of claim 28 where the salt is present in the drilling fluid in an amount of from about 1 wt. % to about saturation based on the total water-based drilling fluid.

37. (original): The method of claim 27 where in providing the water-based drilling fluid, the polymer latex comprises particles that average less than 1 micron in size.

38. (previously presented): A method of inhibiting borehole wall invasion when drilling with a water-based drilling fluid in a subterranean formation, the method comprising: a) providing a water-based drilling fluid comprising: i) from about 0.1 to about 10 vol. % of a polymer latex selected from the group consisting of polymethyl methacrylate, sulfonated styrene/butadiene copolymer, polyvinylacetate copolymer, polyvinyl acetate/vinyl chloride/ethylene copolymer, polyvinyl acetate/ethylene copolymer, natural latex, polyisoprene, polydimethylsiloxane, and mixtures thereof; ii) from about 0.25 to about 20 lb/bbl of a precipitating agent selected from the group consisting of silicates, aluminum complexes, ether carboxylates, and mixtures thereof; iii) at least 1 wt. % of a salt selected from the group consisting of calcium chloride, sodium chloride, potassium chloride, magnesium chloride, calcium bromide, sodium bromide,

potassium bromide, calcium nitrate, sodium formate, potassium formate, cesium formate, and mixtures thereof; iv) from about 0.005 to about 2 vol. % of a surfactant selected from the group consisting of betaines, alkali metal alkylene acetates, sultaines, ether carboxylates, and mixtures thereof; and v) water making up the balance, where the proportions are based on the total water-based drilling fluid; and b) circulating the water-based drilling fluid in contact with a borehole wall.

39. (cancelled)

40. (currently amended): A method of inhibiting borehole wall invasion when drilling with a water-based drilling fluid in a subterranean formation, the method comprising: a) providing a water-based drilling fluid comprising: i) from about 0.1 to about 10 vol. % of a sulfonated styrene/butadiene copolymer latex comprising particles that average less than 1 micron in size; ii) from about 0.25 to about 20 lb/bbl of a precipitating agent selected from the group consisting of silicates, aluminum complexes, ether carboxylates, and mixtures thereof; and iii) water making up the balance, where the proportions are based on the total water-based drilling fluid; and b) circulating the water-based drilling fluid in contact with a borehole wall.

41. (currently amended): The method of Claim 40 ~~wherein the drilling fluid is being used to stabilize shale or reduce drilling fluid loss while drilling in depleted sands~~ where the borehole wall comprises depleted sands and shale, and where the drilling fluid stabilizes the shale and reduces drilling fluid loss.

42. (previously presented): A method of inhibiting borehole wall invasion when drilling with a water-based drilling fluid in a subterranean formation to reduce drilling fluid loss while drilling in depleted sands, the method comprising: a) providing a water-based drilling fluid comprising: i) from about 0.1 to about 10 vol. % of a sulfonated styrene/butadiene copolymer latex; and ii) water making up the balance, where the proportions are based on the total water-based drilling

fluid; and b) circulating the water-based drilling fluid in contact with a borehole wall.

43. (cancelled)